

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A belt member, comprising a seam portion formed by overlapping and
2 adhering both longitudinal end portions thereof to constitute an endless belt
3 stretched and circulated by a rotative, first stretching member and a second
4 stretching member,

5 wherein a length of the seam portion is no less than a length between
6 a first point at which the endless belt is separated from one of the first
7 stretching member and the second stretching member and a second point at
8 which the endless belt is brought into contact with the other one of the first
9 stretching member and the second stretching member.

1 2. An image forming apparatus, comprising:

2 the belt member as set forth in claim 1;

3 a photosensitive member, operable to support a toner image thereon;

4 and

5 a transfer member, operable to transfer the toner image from the
6 photosensitive member onto a recording medium transported by the belt
7 member.

1 3. An image forming apparatus, comprising:

2 the belt member as set forth in claim 1;

3 a photosensitive member, operable to support a toner image thereon;

4 a primary transfer device, operable to transfer a toner image from the

5 photosensitive member onto the belt member; and

6 a secondary transfer device, operable to transfer the toner image
7 from the belt member onto a recoding medium.

1 4. The image forming apparatus as set forth in claim 3, further
2 comprising a third stretching member and fourth stretching member which are
3 arranged such that a circulating path of the belt member is made trapezoidal.

1 5. An image forming apparatus, comprising:
2 the belt member as set forth in claim 1;
3 a heat generator, provided with the first stretching member; and
4 a fixing member, arranged so as to abut against the first stretching
5 member through the belt member, so that a toner image formed on a recording
6 medium is fixed thereon when the recording medium is placed at a nip portion
7 between the fixing member and the belt member.

1 6. The image forming apparatus as set forth in claim 5, further
2 comprising a third stretching member and fourth stretching member which are
3 arranged such that a circulating path of the belt member is made trapezoidal.

1 7. The image forming apparatus as set forth in claim 5, further
2 comprising:
3 a photo sensitive member, operable to support a toner image thereon;
4 and
5 a transfer member, operable to transfer the toner image from the
6 photosensitive member onto a recording medium which is to be transported to

7 the nip position.

1 8. The image forming apparatus as set forth in claim 5, further
2 comprising:

3 a photosensitive member, operable to support a toner image thereon;

4 an intermediate transfer member;

5 a primary transfer device, operable to transfer a toner image from the
6 photosensitive member onto the intermediate transfer member; and

7 a secondary transfer device, operable to transfer the toner image
8 from the intermediate transfer member onto a recoding medium which is to be
9 transported to the nip portion.

1 9. An image forming apparatus, comprising:

2 the belt member as set forth in claim 1; and

3 a fixing member, provided with a heat generator and arranged so as
4 to abut against the first stretching member through the belt member, so that a
5 toner image formed on a recording medium is fixed thereon when the
6 recording medium is placed at a nip portion between the fixing member and
7 the belt member.

1 10. The image forming apparatus as set forth in claim 9, further
2 comprising:

3 a photo sensitive member, operable to support a toner image thereon;

4 and

5 a transfer member, operable to transfer the toner image from the

6 photosensitive member onto a recording medium which is to be transported to
7 the nip position.

1 11. The image forming apparatus as set forth in claim 9, further
2 comprising:

3 a photosensitive member, operable to support a toner image thereon;

4 an intermediate transfer member;

5 a primary transfer device, operable to transfer a toner image from the
6 photosensitive member onto the intermediate transfer member; and

7 a secondary transfer device, operable to transfer the toner image
8 from the intermediate transfer member onto a recoding medium which is to be
9 transported to the nip portion.

1 12. The image forming apparatus as set forth in claim 9, wherein the
2 second stretching member has a semiannular shape.

1 13. The belt member as set forth in claim 1, wherein the belt member is
2 wound by a plurality of turns so that the length of the seam portion is made no
3 less than a circumference of the endless belt.

1 14. The belt member as set forth in claim 13, wherein the belt member is
2 formed with a stepped portion through which both longitudinal ends of the belt
3 member oppose to each other in a circumferential direction of the endless belt.

1 15. An image forming apparatus, comprising:

2 a rotative, first stretching member;

3 a second stretching member;

4 a belt member, comprising a seam portion formed by overlapping and
5 adhering both longitudinal end portions thereof to constitute an endless belt
6 stretched and circulated by the first stretching member and the second
7 stretching member;

8 a fixing member, provided with a heat generator and arranged so as
9 to abut against the first stretching member and the second stretching member
10 through the belt member, so that a toner image formed on a recording medium
11 is fixed thereon when the recording medium is placed at a nip portion between
12 the fixing member and the belt member;

13 wherein a length of the seam portion is no less than a length between
14 a first point at which the fixing member is abutted against the first stretching
15 member through the belt member and a second point at which the fixing
16 member is abutted against the second stretching member through the belt
17 member.

1 16. The image forming apparatus as set forth in claim 15, wherein the
2 second stretching member has a semiannular shape.

1 17. The image forming apparatus as set forth in claim 15, further
2 comprising:

3 a photo sensitive member, operable to support a toner image thereon;

4 and

5 a transfer member, operable to transfer the toner image from the
6 photosensitive member onto a recording medium which is to be transported to
7 the nip position.

1 18. The image forming apparatus as set forth in claim 15, further
2 comprising:

3 a photosensitive member, operable to support a toner image thereon;

4 an intermediate transfer member;

5 a primary transfer device, operable to transfer a toner image from the
6 photosensitive member onto the intermediate transfer member; and

7 a secondary transfer device, operable to transfer the toner image
8 from the intermediate transfer member onto a recording medium which is to be
9 transported to the nip portion.